(b) if so, whether the claims of the 'Beej Bachao Andolan' in the Garhwal region have been verified: and

(c) if so, the steps, if any, taken by Government to popularise traditional and high-yielding varieties which would also reduce dependence on chemical pesticides and fertilizers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHA KUMAR). (a) to (c) The local varieties normally have low yielding potential and adptod to low yielding environments. Under high fertility situations their yield potential is low due to lodging and insert pest and disease damage. In some of the cases such as basmati rice, the local types have been found extremely desirable due to their superior grain quality features. Seeds of traditional Basmati type rice varieties are being multiplied on large scale and made available to the farmers. In other cases some of the local type possess specific feature such as resistance to diseases and insect pests and these are used in hybridization programmes to transfer the genes controlling these features to high yielding background to develop superior improved varieties. Such disease and pest resistant improved varieties help in reducing the dependence on chemical pesticides and fungicides.

Collection, evaluation, catalouging and conservation of local germplasm is an continuous process which is carried-out in all important crops and main responsibility lies with National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources. Local materials identified as promising for different features are used in the varietal improvement programmes.

Agreement between India and Israel for Agricultural Development

6571. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the agreements in force between Government of India and Israel for various agricultural programmes;

(b) the details thereof; and

(c) whether State Governments have been involved in these agricultural programmes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) and (b) An agreement for cooperation in the field of agriculture between the Governments of India and Israel was signed in December 1993 which interalia provides for cooperation in agricultural science and technology including research, education, extension and training, development projects and joint ventures between companies or institutions of the two countries through collaborative activities and exchanges in the areas of water and soil management, arid and semi arid crop production, plant and animal sciences, veterinary science, farm mechanisation and technology, fruit and vegetable production, post harvest and processing technology, plant protection and control, agribusiness, agro forestry etc. Cooperation under the agreement is to be carried out through Biennial Work Plan.

(c) The State Governments would be consulted, whenever required, during the implementation of the Work Plan.

Revitalisation of cooperative sector

6572. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to revitalise the cooperative sector;

(b) whether there is a need to revamp the National Cooperative Development Corporation;

(c) if so, the steps taken in that direction; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) The Central Government have recently initiated a

series of measures to revitalise Cooperatives at grass root level. These include:

(i) Initiating the Business Development planning for Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies;

(ii) Strengthening the role of Federal Cooperatives in relation to Primary Cooperative Societies;

(iii) Supporting of self help efforts of the Cooperatives;

(iv) Efforts to make Cooperative Sector democratic and functionally independent;

(v) Strengthening the training of Cooperative Personnel to make the Cooperatives professionalised and improve their working;

(vi) Steps have been initiated to replace the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 1984 on the lines of the recommendations made by the Committee appointed to suggest a 'Model Cooperative Act' and formulation of a National Policy on Cooperatives.

(b) to (d) A proposal to enlarge scope of activities of National Cooperative Development Corporation by amending the National Cooperative Development Corporation Act, 1962 is under consideration of the Government. The proposal includes coverage of live stock products, poultry feed, industrial goods, products, of cottage and village industry, handicraft and allied industries etc.

Plans for drought prone areas of Orissa

6573. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any plan has been formulated for drought prone areas of Kalahandi, Koraput, and Bolangir districts in Orissa;

(b) if so, the reasons for non-implementation of plans and programmes; and

(c) the details of the plans and steps taken to implement the plans?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) to (c) A Drought Prone Areas Programme is being implemented in identified areas in the country. Under this programme, the identified areas are developed on watershed basis by undertaking core activities namely, land and watershed development, afforestation and pasture development for mitigating the adverse effects of drought on crops and livestock in the long-run. 8 Blocks in the district of Bolangir and 11 Blocks in Kalahandi have been identified as drought prone under this programme. No Block has been covered under this programme in the district of Koraput since it is not identified as drought prone.

Marine and fisheries research

6574. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Marine/Fisheries research is not related to the Agricultural research and the ICAR;

(b) if so, whether Government are likely to create a separate National Organisation to control and guide the research by the existing different research institutes; and

(c) the details of the existing Marine/Fisheries Research institutions in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) Marine fisheries is considered under the Agriculture and Allied Sectors in the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) system.

(b) There is no such proposal.

(c) The institutes related to marine/fisheries research under the ICAR are as follows:

(i) Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Cochin established in 1947.